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# Actions that Make A Difference Building Partnerships

Travel across the country and you will witness the “Put It Down” campaign already in progress. Many states have already banned the use of hand-held devices and texting while driving a vehicle. In each of these states, partnerships with communities and businesses are making the difference between positive change and the status quo.

As we work to make our roads safer for everyone, it is important to realize that we, as individuals, businesses, communities, organizations and government bodies, each have something to offer, and we can each make a positive contribution to the “Put It Down” campaign. Change comes about when everyone unites to pool resources and call upon a variety of experiences to help meet goals and objectives that make all of us safer on the roads. In order to raise awareness of the consequences of distracted driving, we are encouraging you to work together to create a campaign that includes diverse partnerships, consisting of committed individuals, businesses and organizations.

## Taking Inventory of Your State and Community & Defining Goals

In order to focus on your campaign’s efforts in areas that will bring about the greatest gains, you must first take inventory of your state and community. Ask questions such as how much public education has to occur to generate support for “Put It Down” efforts? Does the state have any enforcement laws? Is there strong public support for strengthening these laws? How strong are the law enforcement efforts? After you have found some answers, you can then decide the best way to allocate resources in order

to realize improvements. Every state and community is different and no one particular strategy will work universally.

Having taken inventory of your state, identify possible partnerships that can meet your campaign goals and then utilize your partnerships to effectively work toward improvements in the areas that you have identified. Strive for reasonable and obtainable goals. Be specific about what activities will work best to increase safe driving patterns in your state or community. What will “Put It Down” do? Will your “Put It Down” campaign focus on public education or enforcement or both? Will it work to close gaps in laws about driving and cell phone use? By setting attainable and realistic goals, you will greatly improve your success rate.

## Developing Partner Incentives

It's important to explain to potential partners why distracted driving is a vital issue to them and the community. Explain the benefits of becoming a “Put It Down” partner. Of course, the “hook” will vary depending upon the organization or individual partner. Keep in mind that individuals and organizations are motivated and energized for different reasons. Spell out what their role will be as a “Put It Down” partner. Some suggested incentives might be:

- Making materials and coalition building tools available to partners.
- Keeping partners informed on “Put It Down” goals and progress.
- Informing partners of “Put It Down” success stories.

- Helping to generate media coverage of partner's involvement in "Put It Down."
- Building public acknowledgement for a partner's good work in the community.

### **What Every Partnership Can Do**

- Create or join a "Put It Down" coalition in your community.
- Seek leadership and participation from mayors, councils, boards and other officials.
- Issue a proclamation in support of "Put It Down" efforts.
- Support traffic enforcement of cell phone use laws as one of the best investments of scarce enforcement resources.
- Implement cell phone use and driving policies for all public employees and encourage businesses to do the same.
- Publicize state cell phone use and driving laws and support activities to improve them.
- Work with local media outlets to reach as many people as possible with messages about distracted driving.

- Contact local legislators asking them to support strong cell phone use and driving legislation.
- Team with local law enforcement and community members to support their efforts to improve safe driving patterns in the community.
- Donate merchandise or discount coupons that law enforcement officers could distribute to safe drivers.
- Use businesses' internal and external communication methods to publicize "Put It Down" goals, achievement and success stories, and provide information about how others can get involved in "Put It Down".
- Address business and civic groups on the consequences of driving distractions.

Working together, we can make safe driving a new priority, invigorate the public, work toward strengthening laws and enforcement efforts, making our roads safer for everyone.